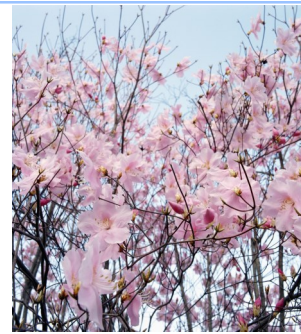


# Maryland WIC

Better Nutrition Brighter Future

## VENDOR UPDATE

Spring 2018



### eWIC



The Maryland WIC Program is happy to announce that we have successfully changed from a check based system to an electronic benefit delivery system called eWIC. The conversion began in January of 2017 and was completed in October of 2017. The WIC benefits are now loaded to the family eWIC account instead of on a paper check and require all authorized retailers (grocers and farmers) to process benefit redemptions through a point-of-sale (POS) device.

While there have been some growing pains along the way, we want to take the time to properly thank you for being so patient and helping us implement this enormous project! Participants and retailers are very happy with the change to eWIC. The eWIC transaction is faster and more efficient for stores and participants. We understand that it may be frustrating for some, but as the rest of the world races forward in the technology age, we must embrace what is more economical for everyone. Thanks again for your hard work in making this a successful transition from paper to plastic!



### THE AUTHORIZED PRODUCTS LIST (APL)

The Maryland WIC Approved Product List, also called the APL, is a database that contains Universal Product Codes (UPCs) and Price Lookup Codes (PLUs) of all Maryland WIC approved foods. A WIC transaction cannot be completed unless the UPC or PLU of the item being purchased is in the APL. The APL is maintained by Maryland WIC staff.

Maryland's current APL contains thousands of UPCs and PLUs. The APL will always be a work in progress because manufacturers add or remove UPCs every day. New products enter the market and package sizes change – which often means a new UPC. We need the help of vendors to make sure the APL is as complete and up-to-date as possible.

If an item doesn't scan, but you believe it should be WIC approved, let someone in your store management office know. Fruits and vegetables are seasonal items and are hard to keep up-to-date in the APL. Your corporate IT staff can often correct problems with fruits and vegetables not scanning as WIC approved by properly mapping them to the appropriate codes. Please talk to your corporate office about this. If you want to submit a UPC for consideration, the easiest way is through our website. Simply register for an account and enter all of the information requested. You may also fill out a paper form and fax it to the State WIC office at 410-333-5683. A nutritionist reviews the items submitted and determines if the item should be WIC approved. Approved items are then added to the APL.

Newly approved UPCs may take up to 72 hours from the date of approval until downloaded to the store's APL file and available for purchase. Go to our website, [www.mdwic.org](http://www.mdwic.org), under eWIC and select one of the following:

#### Submitting products to the WIC Approved Products List (APL)

To submit products not currently on the APL that you think maybe WIC approved, please complete one of the following:

- [Submit on-line](#)
- [Submit a manual form](#)

### CASHIER TIPS FOR eWIC

- You no longer need to "police" for store brands, the APL determines what is allowed.
- If an item scans and is approved by the POS system, you MUST let the participant receive that item.
- The eWIC Card must always be the first form of payment.
- Be sure each checkout lane has a copy of the Authorized Foods List, you will refer to it frequently.
- WIC participants cannot use self-checkout lanes.

## CHANGES TO REQUIRED MINIMUM STOCK



Since the implementation of eWIC, we have been evaluating and revising Maryland's vendor materials, including the minimum stock thresholds. We have found that many states have reduced their thresholds, particularly with infant formula.

Because we have had many retailer complaints about the low volume of liquid formula sales, we decided to evaluate the issuance/redemption rates of these formulas. Since participants no longer have to buy all of their formula during one shopping visit, we have decided to remove the minimum stocking requirement of the Similac Advance and Gerber Good Start Soy Liquid Concentrate Formulas and reduce the requirement for Gerber Good Start Soy Powder. We will continue to monitor these reductions to ensure that the participants have adequate access and, if necessary, make further adjustments to the minimum stocking requirements.



The new Minimum Stocking Requirements are **effective April 9, 2018** and reflect the following revisions:

**Removed from minimum stock:** Similac Advance Liquid Concentrate Formula

**Removed from minimum stock:** Gerber Good Start Soy Liquid Concentrate Formula

**Reduced minimum stock:** Gerber Good Start Soy Powder Formula (from 10 to 4 cans)

Please ensure that all store personnel are familiar with the new Minimum Stocking Requirements revisions.

The Minimum Stocking Requirements are also available online at [www.mdwic.org](http://www.mdwic.org). If you have any questions, please contact Terri Buckler at 410-767-5722, Debbie Earl at 410-767-5433 or Andrea Tompkins at 410-767-5251.

## 2018 CASHIER TRAINING SCHEDULE

Cashier training sessions are offered at locations statewide to accommodate WIC vendors with staff training needs. Cashier training is not mandatory; however, we strongly encourage you to take advantage of these training opportunities. Regular cashier training can help keep vendor staff up to date on WIC program policies and procedures, and WIC authorized foods. Training can also reduce the likelihood of sanctions and lost revenue due to cashier error. Well trained cashiers ensure a smooth WIC transaction and a happy customer. Happy customers are likely to return to your store when they need to shop again. Additionally, in-store cashier trainings can be scheduled upon request.



The 2018 Cashier Training Schedule was mailed to all vendors in December 2017. The schedule is also available online at [www.mdwic.org](http://www.mdwic.org), under the Vendor tab.

## WIC VENDOR SIGN

The Code of Maryland Regulation 10.54.03.15B(1)(b) requires vendors to display, in a conspicuous place, the WIC sign that has been provided by the WIC Program. Do you have the correct "eWIC Accepted Here" sign posted? If not, call any of the Vendor Staff and we will send you a sign.



## VENDOR UNIT CUSTOMER SERVICE

If you need assistance from the WIC Program Vendor Unit, please call in advance to schedule an appointment. Visitors must report to the building security desk and be announced before proceeding to the WIC Program administrative offices. If you have any questions, or need to schedule an appointment, please contact Terri Buckler at 410-767-5722, Andrea Tompkins at 410-767-5251, or Debbie Earl at 410-767-5433. You may also reach us toll-free at 1-800-242-4WIC (4942).



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